



Wolverhampton Gurdwara – the 'house of the Guru' interior.



Ek Onkar, Sikh symbol for God

Wolverhampton SACRE

Unit 2.16 Year 6

Sikhs in Wolverhampton: what can we learn?

How is faith expressed in Sikh communities and traditions?

What is it like to be a Sikh in Wolverhampton?
Sikh beliefs and ways of living.

Wolverhampton SACRE
Support for the Agreed
Syllabus

This unit is one of a series of examples written for SACRE and teachers of RE by consultant Lat Blaylock of RE Today Services. Contact Lat for support and guidance on the syllabus via email: lat@retoday.org.uk

UNIT TITLE:**YEAR GROUP: 6****What is it like to be a Sikh in Wolverhampton?
Sikh beliefs and ways of living****ABOUT THIS UNIT:**

This unit offers teachers the chance to enable pupils to gain a richer knowledge and understanding of the Sikh religion in a clear and straightforward way, taking account of the history, current practice and beliefs of the Sikhs in Britain today. It builds upon earlier units in the Wolverhampton syllabus from 5-7 and 7-9 year old RE, deepening knowledge and using the concepts of religious study to help pupils enlarge their understanding. It provides for pupils to learn from some Sikh stories, ideas and concepts and to develop their own appreciation of Sikh religion. There is a particular focus on beliefs and ways of living.

Where this unit fits in:

This unit is a core opportunity for pupils to learn about Sikh life and faith, one of Wolverhampton's major religious communities. It builds upon work done in Key Stage One by providing the chance for concise and comprehensive teaching about one tradition over a complete unit of work. It also builds on children's experiences of listening to religious stories and finding meaning from them and from religious festivals in KS1

Estimated time for this unit: 10+ hours. It is recognised that some schools will use parts of this unit and teach it over fewer hours, in half a term: select the content most appropriate to your pupils learning needs.

Key concepts addressed by this unit:

- Religious beliefs, teachings and sources
- Religious practices and ways of living
- Questions of identity, belonging, meaning and values.

ATTITUDES FOCUS: The unit provides opportunities for the development of these attitudes:

- Recognising what it means to be committed and showing some commitment to others
- Treating others with care and with fairness
- Showing respect to others
- Showing awareness of what matters to themselves, developing their self- understanding

Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**The unit enables pupils to develop:**

- **Spiritually** by discussing and reflecting on key questions of meaning that are at the heart of Sikh traditions and practices.
- **Morally** by considering issues about community harmony and by thinking through ideas about morality from Sikh communities and sources
- **Socially** by engaging thoughtfully with the mixed religious communities of Wolverhampton
- **Culturally** by encountering people, literature, arts and resources from local Sikh cultures.

<p>In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</p> <p>Sikhi Guru, Khalsa, Mool Mantar, langar, sewa, Gurdwara, Guru Granth Sahib, Nam Simran, Harimandir Sahib (the Golden Temple), Sewa</p> <p>Religious studies Sacred, Holy, Authority, belief, scripture, festival, celebration, worship, symbol.</p> <p>The language of shared human experience Community Commitment Application Hypocrisy,</p>	<p>Resources</p> <p>From the BBC: a key resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Life My Religion Sikhs is the best resource for this unit, and can be used in 9 clips, all filmed recently in the West Midlands. https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05p6t8s/clips • BBC's KS2 Bitesize programmes 'Religion Road' are also useful. https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zsjpyrd/articles/zkjkpmn • www.sikhnet.com (some excellent story-videos here) • www.sikhs.org ▪ The Sikh Langar: http://allaboutsikhs.com/way/langar.htm ▪ The Pingalwara's website: http://www.pingalwaraonline.org/ ▪ http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhhist/pingalwara.html ▪ http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhhist/personalities/sewadars/puransingh.html ▪ Information about Bhagat Puran Singh: http://www.sikhpoint.com/religion/sikhcommunity/puransingh.htm ▪ www.khalsaaid.org is the website of the Sikh humanitarian charity Khalsa Aid and showcases examples of Sikhs working for justice at the centre of some of the world's conflicts. ▪ www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/2015-sikh.pdf From here you can download the Sikh version of the UK government's commitment to halving poverty by 2015, supported by Khalsa Aid. ▪ The Sikh Langar: http://allaboutsikhs.com/way/langar.htm ▪ http://www.cleo.net.uk is the main site for the Cumbria and Lancashire Education Online, and offers access to an expanding range of high quality resources for RE topics. ▪ http://www.shrg.org/ The website of the Sikh Human Rights Group, a useful source for information for teachers. ▪ For a video of a relevant lesson and accompanying materials visit http://www.teachers.tv/searchArchive.do?submitted=true ▪ The National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) has two excellent web starting points for these issues: www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts enables pupils to view and judge numerous works of pupil art on key spiritual ideas from young people. Also search the database of pupil writing for the views of Sikh children. ▪ Online searchable sacred texts from different religions at: www.ishwar.com ▪ Try www.reonline.org.uk for a good general gateway to RE materials. ▪ BBC Religion & Ethics: www.bbc.co.uk/religion ▪ Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance: www.religioustolerance.org/welcome.htm <p>Texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Authentic resources from the Sikh community in Britain, e.g. the Sikh Missionary Society, 10 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middx, UB2 5AA. https://www.sikhmissionarysociety.org/ • New Methods in RE: an experiential approach by Hammond, Hay et al (Oliver & Boyd, 1990) provides a pedagogy and inspirational ideas for exploring with pupils how people with spiritual or religious belief experience the world. • Sikhi for today. Kanwaljit Kaur-Singh • 'My life as a Sikh' Guy, Mizon & Morgan • 'Committed to Sikhi, Ceremonies and Celebrations: Life's End, Denise Chaplin & Lynne Broadbent Hodder Wayland • Steps in RE: Onwards and Upwards, Lesley Beadle, RE Today 2006 provides activities and learning strategies for SEN pupils.
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Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils:

- Opportunities for **spiritual development** come from considering how religions perceive the value of human beings and reflecting on their own views and attitudes;
- Opportunities for **moral development** come from studying ethical issues including those about justice, equality, racial and religious respect to develop personal understanding and attitudes;
- Opportunities for **social development** come from investigating both diversity and common ground between religions and articulating their own ideas on social issues;
- Opportunities for **cultural development** come from developing awareness of positive contributions to community cohesion, religious harmony and good inter-faith relations, and of the need to combat prejudice and discrimination.

EXPECTATIONS: At the end of this unit:

Almost all pupils will be able to:	Most pupils will be able to:	Many pupils will be able to:	Some high achieving pupils will be able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe some of the teaching of Guru Nanak simply • Use religious or spiritual vocabulary such as Mool Mantra, belief in God, Nam Simran to describe what matters to Sikhs • Make links between Sikh ideas and their own ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a developing vocabulary of Sikh concepts to show understanding of Sikh practices, beliefs and ideas • Describe the impact of Sikh faith on individual and community life • Raise & suggest answers to questions about belonging, diversity and commitment • Apply their ideas about belief and commitment to their own & other people's lives • Describe what inspires & influences themselves & others in relation to community, beliefs and diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formulate some questions and suggest some answers arising from the story of Guru Nanak's disappearance: what kind of religious experience was this? ▪ Share questions about God which are often asked and suggest how a Sikh might answer these in light of the teachings of Guru Nanak in the Mool Mantar ▪ Explain their views about connections between stories and teachings of the Gurus and issues in today's world, suggesting what action a Sikh might take, and why, in response ▪ Express their own reasoned ideas, using a variety of media, about the value for society today, of one of the key principles which Sikhs seek to defend e.g. equality, selfless service, commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop arguments about how and why Sikh religion teaches and practices gender equality ▪ Give their own interpretations of Sikh scriptures and stories ▪ Give an account of key similarities and differences between Sikh, Hindu, Muslim and Christian views of God and humanity ▪ Express insights into what they can learn from Sikh ideas themselves ▪ Give an insightful idea about how Guru Nanak would see Wolverhampton today, and why, relating their ideas to sources of authority in Sikhi

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

A formal assessment of each pupil's work is neither required nor desirable for every RE unit. Continuing use of assessment for learning methods is best.

Teachers can assess this work by setting a learning task towards the end of the unit. The task aims to elicit engaged and reflective responses to the material studied throughout the unit across the ability range.

What would the Guru preach if he came to Wolverhampton today? What would he praise, and what would he challenge? Teachers might collect evidence of achievement in this work by enabling pupils to create their own text saying what the guru's message to Wolverhampton might be. This is a strand that runs through the whole unit, where applying ideas to our contemporary community is a recurring focus.

Key questions: How relevant is the teaching of the Guru Granth Sahib to today's society? What would guru Nanak teach to modern Britain? How can we tell? Pupils should interpret the teachings contained in extracts from the Guru Granth Sahib about peace, equality and self-discipline, leading to their own expression of the message of the guru.

Preparation: Give students a choice between a number of reflective writing tasks that show empathy with believers from the Sikh traditions, for example: What do you think would be the most difficult or challenging parts of being a teenage Sikh in a school like ours? If you could take Guru Nanak around Wolverhampton today, what would he like? What would he challenge? Through these questions, pupils make informed responses to Sikh identity, values and commitments, exploring sensitively ideas about what is sacred.

Final draft: The Mool Mantar is a poetic expression of the crystallised teaching of the guru. Perhaps pupils may like to make their own piece of work poetic here as well.

Able, talented learners: To extend this work, ask pupils to apply their knowledge to explain the teaching and perhaps the vision of Sikhi and to interpret the vision in the light of the teaching of another religion. They should research their understanding for themselves, so that they can bring original ideas to the topic. They work towards expressing their own view about the value / relevance of Sikh advice, in comparison to another faith or spiritual leader.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHING AND LEARNING	LEARNING OUTCOMES	<i>Points to note</i>
Who are the Sikhs? What would a Sikh Guru say to us in Wolverhampton today?			
<p>To open up the enquiry of the unit so that pupils can be curious and speculative in their RE work, setting the agenda for a unit.</p>	<p>Why might there be over 24 million followers of a person who lived 500 years ago, including hundreds of thousands in the UK?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the topic with reference to the celebrity culture: how long is a 'Sleb' usually famous for? Maybe 15 minutes, or 15 years if very successful, or even a century or more. But religious figures have an enduring and huge impact. Share the figures about the Sikh population of Wolverhampton (about 22 000+) and the West Midlands (about 115 000+), the UK (over 420 000) and of the world (well over 24 millions). How has this happened? Ask pupils to come up with as many speculative ideas about this as they can. Save these ideas for later in the unit. Update these numbers from recent census figures (2021) as they become available. • The message of the Guru is not easy to sum up but ask pupils to suggest what kind of message a Guru might have for a city like ours. Nanak stood for equality, community, generosity and the continuous remembering of God. He taught 'God is not a Hindu or a Muslim, so whose path shall I follow? I will follow the path of God'. What kind of things would he like about Wolverhampton? What might he want to improve in our county? Again, save the ideas for refining and reference later in the unit. • Get pupils to note down their ideas: 6 strips of paper each on what Nanak might say to Wolverhampton, saved for later use in the unit will be helpful. • If pupils find this very difficult, suggest they sort ideas: would the Guru say: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'I love your city because men and women are treated equally' ○ 'This is a great place because sport matters to everyone here, much more than service' ○ 'It's sad that the name of God is not understood by all you Wolverhampton people.' ○ 'I like the way this city respects minorities and people who are different, and I've got a couple of suggestions for how to do it better.' ○ Local people need to learn to serve each other. There is too much selfishness, which leads to several problems.' 	<p>I can...</p> <p>Describe simple aspects of the guru's teaching</p> <p>Apply ideas from the Guru's teaching for myself (Most pupils)</p> <p>Express varied ideas about how the Guru would respond to our modern city, including spiritual and ethical ideas (Many pupils)</p>	<p><i>This speculative activity is good for personalising the learning and encourages the skill of speculation. RE needs more of these kind of 'enquiring minds' approaches. Of course, it is important that sayings and stories, teachings and beliefs of the Guru are at the forefront of consideration in how the task is tackled. Pupils thus get to deploy a rich knowledge of Sikhi ideas</i></p> <p><i>Follow it up later in the unit, when pupils will be able to add depth and insight to their first thoughts.</i></p>

What meaning does Guru Nanak's teaching have for Sikhs today? And for me?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what Sikhs hold to be holy or sacred. • Enquire into and discover the significance and meaning of the teaching and example of Guru Nanak ▪ Develop their knowledge and understanding of what it means to belong to the Sikh religion. 	<p>Introducing the teachings of Guru Nanak: what did he stand for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give each pupil 3 brightly colour paper shapes (hexagons, squares etc). Ask them to decide with a partner what is meant by 'goodness' and decide on 3 actions that are good, with an example for each. These are written on the paper shapes. They will make a 'mosaic of goodness' later on. • Explain that Sikhs believe that their founder, Guru Nanak, knew all about goodness. Show a picture of Guru Nanak. What qualities do pupils think the artist was trying to convey? Do pupils think he looks wise? Good? Peaceful? These are the intentions of the Sikh styles of painting the Gurus. • Explain that Guru Nanak said that it is not money, or brains or following religious practices like pilgrimages that is important. For Nanak the two important things in life are to do kind deeds and so to find God. • Give pupils a summary of Guru Nanak's teachings (next page). In pairs pupils could discuss what each teaching meant, consider whether the teachings can be grouped in any way, and if so, what the headings might be. They could diamond rank the statements to show which they think is most/least (if any) important/relevant for today. Feedback ideas to group. • Ask the question: what would change if everyone today followed Guru Nanak's teachings. Pupils could work in groups to decide what would change in your families; in school; in our city; in our country; in the whole world. • Pupils could hear what one Sikh young person has to say about following the example of the Guru's today (e.g. from pages 23 - 25 Faiths in Britain today Ed R Rivett) 	<p>Describe why the guru has so many followers today (Most pupils)</p> <p>Apply ideas from the guru's teaching to their views about contemporary life in Wolverhampton. (Most pupils)</p> <p>Reflect on the impact of inspirational individuals on society and communities, expressing clear and well informed views (Many pupils)</p> <p>Interpret the impact of the Sikh code for living insightfully for myself (Some talented pupils)</p>	<p><i>Useful ideas from: Literacy in Religious Education published by DfES February2004. Ref 0051-2004-G</i></p> <p><i>There is a summary of the Guru's message to copy on the next page. From 'Codes for Living' (RE Today publications). Find good learning ideas there. Others appear in other sources.</i></p>

Sikhism

code for living

The teachings of Guru Nanak

There is only one God.

Worship and pray to the one God, and to no one else.

Remember God, work hard and help others.

God is pleased with honest work and true living.

Before God, there is no rich, no poor, no black and no white. It is your actions that make you good or bad.

Men and women are all equal before God.

Love everyone, and pray for the good of all.

Do not fear.

Do not frighten.

Always speak the truth: God and truth are two in one.

Be simple in your food, dress and habits.

God is the end of which no one knows.

The more you say, the more it grows.

Source: The Sikh Missionary Society



This unit is made much more memorable and powerful if a visit can be arranged, whether to the Gurdwara and Langar, or to the places of one of the other faiths studied here. This is always demanding for teachers, but worth the effort if great RE is the result.

There are over 110 000 Sikhs and more than 30 Gurdwaras in the West Midlands.

What can we learn from stories about Sikhs and God? Did Guru Nanak meet God himself?			
<p>Pupils encounter and reflect upon the story of Guru Nanak's disappearance in the river, and his encounter with God.</p> <p>Noting the practical insights and generous results, the question of what kind of experience this was is raised, explored and analysed.</p> <p>Pupils are taught that there are different views about such experiences, and they begin to handle those views carefully for themselves</p>	<p>What made Guru Nanak a spiritual leader? Some people have the capacity to inspire trust in their followers. Pupils could: Identify personal qualities they need to have to inspire the trust of others Talk about who they trust and why. Many great spiritual leaders (like Guru Nanak) lived many centuries ago. Pupils could talk about why people still find Guru Nanak (and other spiritual leaders) relevant for today.</p> <p>Key events and stories from the life of Guru Nanak are called Janam Sakhis. Use the story of Nanak's disappearance and enlightenment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The story of Nanak's disappearance in the river, presumed drowned, and re-emergence after 3 days with the explanation that he had been to the court of God, marks the start of his ministry of teaching. Using a biography of Nanak, students design a fortune line for Nanak from the moment up to his disappearance. (This, and other thinking skills activities are explained in Thinking through RE by V. Baumfield). They could also extend the line from the moments after his disappearance. Encouraging students to reflect on the emotions and life situation of Nanak and analyse and explain the resulting beliefs and teachings. Students write a letter to a friend explaining how they would feel if a member of the family disappeared for 3 days. How would it be if they then reappeared a changed person, claiming to have seen God? How would they feel? Would they think differently about the person? What questions would they ask? How could such a claim be verified? Students can reflect on Nanak's disappearance and consider if they have had any experiences that made them think differently or see things in a different light. <p>What different opinions of the story can be found?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask pupils to quarter an A4 page, and draw a circle in the centre. Write into the circle 'Did Nanak meet with God during his three day disappearance?' (Or pupils can come up with their own good question on this story). In the four quarters, write these prompts: 'A Sikh might believe...' 'A psychologist might say...' 'An agnostic might ask...' 'My ideas include...' Get pupils to move round the class talking to 12 or more different people, and collecting ideas to go onto the sheet. This is a multi-perspectival task, and it's hard. To make it simpler, give pupils 12 possible answers to sort into the 4 categories. You may need to explain a bit about the psychologist or the agnostic to make this work well, or give the pupils a word bank to use in gathering ideas. 	<p>Respond sensitively for themselves to the story of Nanak's disappearance, making links to their own ideas</p> <p>Reflect for themselves on the possibilities of making sense of a miracle story or an encounter with God in a story by asking good questions. (Most pupils)</p> <p>Expressing views clearly on questions of beliefs about the guru's experiences in the light of Sikh teaching (Many pupils).</p> <p>Interpreting some Sikh accounts of the sacred, and developing their own insights about these (Some talented pupils).</p>	<p><i>A version of this key story aimed at younger children can be found on http://www.sln.org.uk/storyboard/stories/si3.htm under the title Nanak's Song. Another version can be found on the Sikh.org website: http://www.sikhs.org/guru1.htm</i></p>

What did Nanak achieve at Kartarpur? Why are The Ten Gurus so important in the Sikh religion?			
<p>Pupils encounter and reflect upon the story of Guru Nanak and the ideal community of Kartarpur</p> <p>Explore and analyse the concept of a 'commune' based on faith and shared values, where diverse people live together for the wellbeing of all: is this possible? Find out about Kartarpur today.</p> <p>Pupils are taught that religious community can be a powerful way of binding people together, but also that sometimes idealistic communities can fracture. What do they think makes the difference?</p>	<p>Focus on Sikh ways of living and sources of guidance in Britain today (use the BBC series 'My Life, My Religion: Sikhs')</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind pupils about Guru Nanak (founder of Sikhi), the first Guru, finding out about his upbringing, and hearing some stories from his early life. Tell the story of his call, when he disappeared for 3 days whilst bathing. Discuss what pupils think happened to him. Talk about questions like these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was Guru Nanak's early life like? What happened to Guru Nanak that caused him to start teaching people about God? What did Guru Nanak do and what did he teach people about God? About equality? About service? Tell pupils about his journey and his teaching about God. Why did he call God the 'Wonderful Lord' (Waheguru)? <p>Kartarpur: a perfect community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask pupils to imagine their community turned perfect. They could write a poem. What would be gone forever? How would people behave? What feelings would they have? Teach pupils that after Guru Nanak spent many years travelling to tell people about God, he settled and founded the town of Kartarpur in 1504 on the right bank of the Ravi River. The name Kartarpur means "city of Creator or God", from Here all people, irrespective of their religion or caste, lived together, representing the first 'Sikh commune'. Nanak died there in 1539. Imagine what it would be like to live in a town where everyone worked hard to follow the teachings of the Guru. Ask pupils to imagine that they are interviewing a Sikh from the town in Guru Nanak's day. What questions might they ask? What answers might be given? (e.g. Why have you moved to Kartarpur? In what ways is it different from other towns? What difference does it make having Guru Nanak living in your town? What kinds of people live in Kartarpur? Why? How do you put Sikh teachings into practice?) Kartarpur is today on the border between India and Pakistan, and had been largely abandoned - but it still inspires devotion and idealism. Find out about the 'Kartarpur Corridor' which has been opened in recent years to enable Sikhs to visit the city, which still represents an ideal community where religious hatred and bigotry has no place. 	<p>Respond sensitively for themselves to the story of Nanak's ideal community at Kartarpur making links to their own ideas</p> <p>Reflect for themselves on the possibilities of a community where people unite in their values and celebrate each other's diversity. Is our community close to this?</p> <p>Expressing views clearly on questions of community</p>	<p><i>This lesson is typical of the content coverage RE seeks – but be selective and use only a part of it if that suits your pupils.</i></p> <p><i>Sikh pupils may have much to contribute to this – if they feel comfortable to share their experiences, but this must never be forced. The teacher needs to lead the learning!</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about people who inspire your pupils. What is different about Guru Nanak and the pupils' examples? What is the same? (e.g. For Sikhs, Guru Nanak had a message from God, so there might be some pupils with their own faith who recognise this special quality in the Guru; charisma, ability to inspire, generosity, compassion – these are qualities many people may possess) <p>More stories of more Gurus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils should learn about stories of some of the other Gurus, remembering that the Gurus are not gods but more like saints – holy and special people who served God and inspired others: for example: • Guru Arjan (the fifth guru) who compiled the Adi Granth (holy book), built what became the Golden Temple at Amritsar, and was the first Sikh martyr. • Guru Har Gobind (the sixth Guru) who is remembered at the Sikh festival of Divali for helping to have prisoners released. • Guru Tegh Bahadur (the ninth Guru) who was martyred for the principle and value of religious tolerance. Talk about martyrdom and ask pupils to consider what causes they think are worth living or dying for, and why. Talk about Sikh values of equality and care, service to others and meditation. • Pupils learn about Guru Gobind Singh (the tenth Guru), and how he founded the Khalsa in 1699CE, the 'community of the pure' to which all initiated Sikhs belong at Baisakhi. Ask them to think about what their response might have been if they had been followers of the Guru at Baisakhi. Learn about the 5Ks some Sikhs wear: ask what matters most, how you dress or how you behave? An annual festival to mark this founding of the Khalsa is celebrated. They consider: Is there anything you think is worth living for or dying for? What is it? 		
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How can God be found? What do you think of a Sikh's answer?			
<p>Using a second story from Sikh tradition, pupils explore the idea that theology and ethics are linked, or that believing in God can lead to being good.</p>	<p>Where is God? What difference did Nanak's teaching about God make? Tell this story: "His majesty was puzzled. He thought to himself 'A great king like me should not just be able to win battles and make laws. I ought to be able to make sense of life.' But every time he went to the temple and to worship, he looked everywhere for God. He never saw God. He didn't really expect to, but always wondered where God was to be found. He thought to himself 'They say 'God is everywhere' but it seems to me this is the same as saying 'God is nowhere.'</p>	<p>Respond sensitively for themselves to some teachings of the Sikh Gurus, making links to their own lives</p>	<p><i>Working with story is central to the ways religions communicate their ideas and beliefs. This makes story telling an important art for the RE teacher. Practice and perfect it with this example.</i></p>
<p>The related idea that you can be good without God is also worth the attention of the class of course.</p>	<p>He was a mighty king, so he didn't often admit to being confused. It felt a bit odd to admit that he did not know the answer to this question. But after keeping quiet for a while, he decided that this puzzle was worth a conversation. He asked all his people to tell him: Where is God? 'If you know, come to the palace and tell me' he invited. Lots of people came. They formed a queue. They thought they might get a reward. Some tried to explain God in the stars, or God after death, or God above the skies. Some said God was nowhere at all. The king listened to all the attempts to explain the question, but none of them really satisfied him. The mystery was too deep for all the words.</p>	<p>Reflect for themselves on what they value most, or hold sacred, applying ideas about Nam Simran and Sewa for themselves (Most pupils)</p>	
<p>Pupils use the activities below to explore the stories and the concepts of Nam Simran (awareness of God) and Sewa (service). Pupils learn to understand the links between the two ideas.</p>	<p>The very last person in the queue was a follower of Guru Nanak. He looked a bit scruffy – not dressed for the palace. When his turn to explain his idea came, he strode in to the King's chamber with a cheerful grin. 'Can I have a bowl of fresh milk please?' he said. The courtiers looked at the king, who nodded, with a little smile of his face. They found a huge bowl and filled it with ten or more litres of creamy milk, fresh from the royal dairy. The Sikh man asked the king to put his hand into the milk, 'Feel around for God in there' he said. The king liked the Sikh man, so he did, pulling up his royal sleeve, and swirling it in the white wetness. 'Nothing there my friend' he reported.</p> <p>'Oh dear' said the man. 'Um... let me have a look. Try again now.' Three times he asked his majesty to swirl his hand in the milk. The courtiers ran for towels. The king began to lose patience: 'It's just milk' he said. 'God isn't there. There's nothing there. Do you think I'm a fool?' Then the Guru's follower churned the milk in the bowl, and churned it, and churned it until there was butter in the milk. He scooped out some of the butter. "You're like the milk" he said. "God is in you, but you can't find him. To find God within, you need to churn your life."</p>	<p>Expressing views clearly on questions of beliefs and values in the light of Sikh teaching (Many pupils).</p>	
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	<p>There was silence while his majesty thought about this. His smile returned slowly. 'How can a person churn their life?' he asked.</p> <p>The Sikh replied: 'It's not hard. Chant the scriptures and serve the poor. Do this, and you will touch God in yourself. As the butter is found in the milk, God will be found in your life. The king sat quietly for a few minutes. Then he called for his horse. Chanting the verses of the scriptures he knew from childhood, he set out to see who he might help that day. Never the same again, he found God.</p>		
	<p>In Sikh practice, Nam Simran (chanting) and Sewa (service) are the ways to churn your life, to bring out the God within yourself. God consciousness is available to all, but often missed, or lost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What happens when milk is churned? How is butter made? ▪ What are the hidden messages in this story? ▪ Can you put the key message of the story into one sentence? ▪ Why did the Sikh bother with the milk? Could he not have just told the King how to find God? (the answer here is to do with the fact that spiritual truth can only be learned by the learner, it is not available for instruction) ▪ Write down what you think the king thought about when he saw the butter – you could draw a cartoon and a big thought bubble for His Majesty) ▪ What would it mean to churn up your life? Is it sometimes good when things are all moved around and changed, like churning? ▪ What do you think? Is it possible that people find God in serving others and chanting scripture? ▪ What might happen in the next chapter of this story? Write it for yourself. 		

What do Sikh people think is holy? What matters most in Sikh religion?

Gather and deploy a rich knowledge of Sikh commitment as expressed in stories of the Gurus.

Understand some of the ways Sikhs express their belief in God, e.g. in worship at the Gurdwara in Sewa (service) and Nam Simran (remembering God)

Be increasingly aware of and sensitive to the diversity of religious cultures.

- How do the stories of the Sikh Gurus show commitment?**
- Pupils investigate some stories of commitment and revelation in the Sikh tradition, e.g. stories from the life of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. What were they committed to? What did they believe?
 - They analyse the Mool Mantar’s exploration of the idea of God: One, truth, creator, without form, without enemies, beyond time, not incarnated, self-existent.
 - They respond to Sikh ideas about the divine: do pupils understand the concept of God held by Sikhs? What questions does this raise for them?
 - Pupils find out about the Khalsa, the community of the ‘beloved’ begun by Guru Govind Singh, which is celebrated both at the festival of Vaisakhi and when young Sikhs are initiated into the Khalsa at the amrit Ceremony. Ask pupils to think about the symbolism and obligations of the ceremony and the story, and consider whether these challenges are matched by their own experience of being recognised as a responsible adult. Research at the University of Sunderland suggested that British young people feel grown up when they: get a pay packet / pass a driving test / leave school / have sex for the first time / get drunk for the first time. Are these initiation rituals any good? Are they in any ways similar to religious initiation?
 - Pupils develop understanding of the link between belief and the worship at the Gurdwara. What is sacred here? Why does langar (the common meal or kitchen) play such an important role?

Describe key beliefs of Sikhs, and understand how Sikh beliefs and ideas are expressed, using Sikh terms accurately (Most pupils)

Explain similarities and differences between Sikh ways of taking on responsibility and other ways of doing this in Britain today (Many pupils)

This can reinforce the learning of the story based lesson above, or can be omitted, and picked up in the research and enquiry lesson below about many of the virtues of the Gurus.

A British Sikh Vaisakhi parade
(wikicommons)



wikicommons

Exploring ideas about God: how can we know?			
<p>Share questions about God which are often asked and suggest how a Sikh might answer these in light of the teachings of Guru Nanak in the Mool Mantra</p> <p>Recognise the power and limitations of language in expressing ideas.</p>	<p>What impact did Nanak's teaching about God and service have on the Sikhs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students focus on words of Nanak: 'There is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, but only man... we are all God's children. Hindus and Muslims should live as brothers and sisters, as one family of God.' • Consider the teaching of Guru Nanak about God. The Mool Mantar is a short verse written by Guru Nanak, and describes the qualities of God. It begins with Ek Onkaar (Ik Onkaar): God is one. It is the first verse of the Japji Sahib, the opening section of the Guru Granth Sahib. It is sometimes referred to as the creed of the Sikhs. It is recited daily as part of the morning prayers. • Use a variety of sources to find out about the Mool Mantar and the Ik Onkar symbol. Create a display of artefacts showing the symbol. Interpret the meaning and significance of these symbols for Sikhs today. Use quotations from the Mool Mantar and from the Guru Granth Sahib as a basis for discussion about what Sikhs believe about God. Relate this to the story from the last lesson about how to discover God in our own life. Pupils could select statements from the Mool Mantar and explain what these particular lines tell them about Sikh belief about God, • Or: create a poster using words and pictures to illustrate some of the main Sikh beliefs about God. A good ICT based activity exploring the Mool Mantar is shown in the KS3 DfES video pack: Literacy in Religious Education published February 2004. Ref 0051-2004-G <p>What is God like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the use of gender free language in the Mool Mantar and make comparisons with the male language used to describe God often in the 'West'. • What might a God look like? Or why might God not look like anything? Who made the universe? How did we get here? Are we all equal? How might a Sikh answer questions about God? Ask students in pairs to come up with the words Guru Nanak might want Wolverhampton people in the 21st century to hear about God, and why. • When considering forms God takes what are the limitations of how we express ourselves? Activities can include using metaphors to try to describe God. E.g. If God were a smell, taste, touch, sound, sight- what would he/she be? If God were a car / animal / sport / food / garment / feature of nature / kind of weather? • Ask students to consider if these are useful ways to describe God. What are the outcomes of these descriptions? E.g. Is God sweet like a pear? If so why are there bad things happening. Students can consider and contrast ways that Sikhs describe God to their own. Why might the descriptions be the same/different? How would atheists and agnostics describe 'the God they don't believe in'? 	<p>Connect Sikh stories of the Gurus with some of the ideas of the Mool Mantar</p> <p>Identify and describe similarities and differences to ideas about God found in another religion I have studied (Most pupils)</p> <p>Explain some of the main teachings about God in the Mool Mantar, and give reasons for the diversity of views people hold about God-questions (Many pupils)</p>	<p>The NATRE website's gallery of students; theological art is a very useful place for pupils to explore – maybe for homework – hundreds of different pupils' responses to the question 'where is god?'</p> <p>www.natre.org.uk Click on 'spirited arts'</p> <p>Making space for atheist and agnostic accounts of ultimate reality without God is important here. Open mindedness from both sides of the 'God argument' is a good learning quality.</p>

Who has been inspired by Guru Nanak in recent times?

By exploring an inspirational life, pupils develop their understanding of the application of Sikh teaching

What can we learn about Sikh spiritual ideas from a great life?

- Study the story of Bhagat Puran Singh, 1904 – 92, who gave his life in service of suffering humanity. He made particular strides forward in the care of the mentally ill and the terminally ill. Whenever he saw a deserted dead body (human or animal) immediately he would prepare a grave by his own hand and give the body respect in death. Why? Why doesn't anybody do this?
- Against the backdrop of violence and poverty in 1947 he established an institute which still takes care of the sick, disabled, distressed and abandoned. Throughout his life, whatever money and financial resources he could gather he used to develop this work. His values were determination, faith in God and unending love for suffering humanity. What leads to someone living for others instead of for them self? Why is this rather unusual? Does it lead to happiness?
- He founded the Pingalwara in Amritsar in 1947 with a few discarded patients: it is a home for the disabled. As well as founding, developing and maintaining this Institute, he was a writer, publisher and environmentalist. His contribution in spreading awareness about the global dangers of environmental pollution and the dangers of increasing soil erosion were ahead of his time. His dedication led to him winning many awards. Bhagat Puran Singh died on August 5, 1992. What should his memorial be? Why is his story inspiring to Sikh people? What is inspiring to you?
- Pupils might draw up a three column page, listing all they can discover about Bhagat Puran Singh in the first column, all they admire about a hero of their own in the third column, and using the middle column to note all the similarities and all the differences between the two figures.

Bhagat Puran Singh	Similarities? Differences?	My Hero
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generous • Unselfish • Cared for those others ignored • Inspiring leader • ... • ... 		

- I can:
- Describe how Puran Singh lived
 - Show that I understand why some people call Puran Singh the 'Mother Teresa of Amritsar' (Most pupils)
 - Explain why Puran Singh is for many people heroic and inspirational (Many pupils)
 - Express insights of my own into the impact of Sikh teaching on Puran Singh (Some talented pupils)

There are many good web based sources of information about Bhagat Puran Singh, some in the list above.

It's useful to mention that he is called 'The Sikh mother Teresa' but be wary of seeing this comparison as too important – he is a hero of the human spirit in his own right.

What can we discover and learn about other examples from the Sikh Gurus?

Make links between some events / teachings of the Sikh Gurus and issues in today's world, suggesting what action a Sikh might take, and why, in response to at least one of these.

Express their own reasoned ideas, using a variety of media, about the value for society today, of one of the key principles which Sikhs seek to defend e.g. equality, selfless service, commitment.

Enquiry: What other inspiring Sikh materials can we discover?

Get pupils to use sources of information from library, web, books and Sikh interviews for examples. They might select from a range of stories and guidance from the teachings of Guru Nanak. Examples might include:

- **Teachings on wealth:** The Story of Duni Chand. Focus on words of Guru 'Accursed is the life which is lived only to fatten oneself.' Guru Granth Sahib page 790. (A version of the story for younger children can be found on <http://www.cleo.net.uk/resources/index.php?ks=2&cur=15>) Students can consider impact made by Bill Gates foundation and why/ how we give and what makes proper giving. Explore issues of greed and need, wants and necessities. There are some useful activities in Developing Secondary RE; Justice and equality. P7 and Activity on the Soup Stone story in Looking inwards looking outwards.
- **Teaching on honesty, rich and poor:** story of Malik Bhago and Lalo A version of this story for younger pupils can be found on www.sln.org.uk/storyboard/stories/si2.htm
- **Teachings on equality and service (sewa): Guru Amar Das (3rd guru):** (Guru Granth Sahib page 1378) [For biography visit <http://www.sikhs.org/guru3.htm>] Guru Amar Das is particularly remembered for the founding of the langar. (details can be found on <http://www.sikhs.org/guru3.htm>)
- **The Langar** Explore with pupils through a variety of sources how the Langar expresses equality and service (Sewa)

Links with today:

- Reflect on ways in which people are treated unequally today, why this is and what might be done about it.
- Consider how wrist bands (e.g. for anti-racism, against global debt, for breast cancer awareness) can express values like equality. Students can design their own special wristband or tee shirt to express equality. What would they choose to focus on and what do they think needs changing in society? Would they have a logo/ special colour? What logo might a Sikh use for this purpose

Describe and make a link between the teachings of the gurus and Sikh behaviour and action today

Show understanding of the impact for a Sikh for believing that God made all humans equal (Most pupils)

Comment respectfully on two opposite viewpoints on a contemporary issue, explaining clearly who holds these views *and the views I hold myself* (Many pupils)

This enquiry process is powerful for good learning, but takes time. Teachers may like to give groups of pupils the choice about where they start with this work, and arrange a plenary in which each group shares their answer to 'what is inspiring for Sikhs?' or 'What is sacred for Sikhs' with the class.

References:
Developing secondary RE: Religion, Justice and equality. Ed R.Rivett

Looking Inward
Looking Outward
RE Today / CEM, 1997

Continued

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Teaching on standing against oppression and injustice Guru Har Gobind (6th Guru) [For biography go to http://www.sikhs.org/guru6.htm] Guru Har Gobind refused to be freed from prison unless Hindu prisoners were released with him. This event is remembered today at Sikh Diwali celebrations. Pupils should explore the story and identify the beliefs and values Har Gobind put into practice.</p> <p>Links with today: Har Gobind worked to achieve the release of prisoners of conscience. Look at Amnesty International website and real life stories about prisoners of conscience today. How does this reflect the work done by Har Gobind and the Sikh understanding of justice and equality? What values underpin Amnesty and the work of Peter Benenson, and how do they link to Sikhi and the actions of Har Gobind? Students can consider why are people are imprisoned for acts of conscience and what can be done to help. Role plays can be devised with prisoners, guards, a Sikh letter writer and government officials all reflecting on the situation. What might a Sikh want to do in this situation and why?</p> <p>Other activities can include reflective diary accounts, compare and contrast statements and rank ordering values of Sikhs, themselves and Amnesty International. Are there similarities/differences?</p> <p>Teaching on commitment and self sacrifice Guru Teg Bahadur** (9th guru) [For biography visit http://www.sikhs.org/guru9.htm] Explore the concept of sacrifice through the story of Guru Tegh Bahadur, using role-play to help students gain a deeper understanding and insight. Begin by reading about the Guru, his character and values. Having gained a basic knowledge of the story, the pupils are then asked to think empathetically about the key players. The class is divided into small groups, with each group acting out a short scene from the story, ending with a tableau. Select four pupils to play the key figures of the story while others devise, write and then pitch a range of questions to them. This "hot-seating" shows the progression in both knowledge and understanding that pupils can make through the lesson.</p> <p>Teaching on commitment and brotherhood Guru Gobind Singh (10th guru) [For biography visit http://www.sikhs.org/guru10.htm] Guru Gobind Singh is the founder of the Khalsa – the Sikh brotherhood. Begin by reading about the Guru, his character and values. Having gained a basic knowledge of the story, develop activities to engage pupils with the key concepts of having the courage to stand up for what you believe (moral courage/commitment) and expressing beliefs through actions and symbols (e.g. the wearing of the 5Ks).</p> 		<p>Special People (Developing Primary RE) RE Today – has a section on how a Sikh today puts seva in action</p> <p>Links with Sikh teachings on equality, sewa and human rights put into practice today</p> <p>www.amnestyinternational.org</p>
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What can we learn from stories of the Sikh Gurus about equality?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to reflect for themselves on what they value most, or hold sacred. • Analyse some Sikh accounts of the sacred, and develop their own ideas about these. Explore and express a response to some Sikh values. 	<p>Equality for every person, no matter what?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining the values of the Gurus: equality of race, creed, and gender: What would Guru Nanak’s message to our society be? Who teaches wisdom in our society? What makes a Guru worthy of following? • Reflecting on the ideas of sewa (service to humanity) and Nam Simran (meditation on the scriptures). What support or challenge do these practices provide to Sikhs? What supports and challenges me? • Examining empathetically what British Sikhs today say about their faith and tradition, its value, influence and what it holds sacred (pupils can collect real life Sikh young people’s thoughts and expression from the database of pupils writing https://old.natre.org.uk/db/profile2a.php Search here for Sikh answers to RE questions). • Developing pupils’ own self understanding through exploring questions such as: who do I follow? Who would my Guru be? What service to humanity matters to me? What kinds of equality do I build up? What is sacred to me? (skills of synthesis are practiced in tasks like these) • Setting pupils to write an encyclopaedia entry, or internet home page for Guru Nanak, answering the question: What is sacred to Sikhs? • Setting pupils to consider a summary of Guru Nanak’s teaching, and develop in the light of it some ‘sentences for a better world’ of their own, explaining how their ideas would change family, school, locality, nation or world for the better. 	<p>Pupils respond to the lives of key Sikh figures, referring to Sikh teaching about what is sacred and understanding the value of respect for diversity)</p>	<p><i>This lesson can be omitted if the teacher wishes to give more time to pupils’ own enquiry from the lesson about the example of the Gurus above.</i></p>

What is there for me to learn from the Sikhs about community, beliefs and equality?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respond for them-selves to Sikh ideas about community, beliefs and equality. ▪ Use enquiry and analytical skills to develop a well reasoned expression of the messages Nanak might have for Wolverhampton. ▪ Express with insight their own understanding of connections between our lives and the teaching of the Sikh Gurus. 	<p>Provide resources and materials for pupils to review their understanding of the impact of the gurus. They can remind themselves of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigating stories of commitment and revelation in the Sikh tradition, e.g. stories from the life of Guru Nanak and his followers. What were they committed to? What did they believe? Analyse the Mool Mantar’s exploration of the idea of God: One, truth, creator, without form, without enemies, beyond time, not incarnated, self existent. • Responding to Sikh ideas about the divine: do pupils understand the concept of God held by Sikhs? What questions does this raise for them? • Developing understanding of the link between belief and the worship of the Gurdwara. What is sacred here? Why does langar (the common meal or kitchen) play such an important role? • Examining the values of the Gurus: equality of race, creed, and gender: What would Guru Nanak’s message to our society be? Who teaches wisdom in our society? What makes a Guru worthy of following? • Reflecting on the ideas of sewa (service to humanity) and Nam Simran (meditation on the scriptures). What support or challenge do these practices provide to Sikhs? What supports and challenges me? • Examining empathetically what British Sikhs today say about their faith and tradition, its value, influence and what it holds sacred. <p>What impact might my studies of Sikh gurus have for me?</p> <p>What would Nanak say to Wolverhampton today?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing pupils’ own self understanding through exploring questions such as: who do I follow? Who would my Guru be? What service to humanity matters to me? What kinds of equality do I build up? What is sacred to me? (skills of synthesis) ▪ Ask pupils in a final task to draw together and develop their understanding of Sikhi in relation to Wolverhampton. Return to the opening activity and explore further. Would the Guru be pleased to see a county like ours? Would he challenge us to be different? What would his verdict be on our shopping centres, on the presence of homeless people, on our thoughts and ideas about God, on the way men and women and different races and religions treat each other? In each case, what would he like and what would he challenge? 	<p>Express views and insights into questions of value and commitment for myself in the light of Sikh teaching (Many pupils)</p> <p>Interpret Sikh commitments in various ways for myself, using the study to develop and express insights of my own (Some talented pupils).</p>	<p>This task may be useful for summative assessment, but in RE not every unit has to have an assessment at the end of it.</p>

What have we learned from the Sikhs?

<p>Make links between some events / teachings of the Sikh Gurus and issues in today's world, suggesting what action a Sikh might take, and why, in response to at least one of these.</p> <p><i>Express their own reasoned ideas, using a variety of media, about the value for society today, of one of the key principles which Sikhs seek to defend e.g. equality, selfless service, commitment.</i></p>	<p>A lesson to sum up the unit Learning from Sikhi Focus on Sikh ways of living and sources of guidance in Britain today – recap using the BBC series 'My Life, My Religion: Sikh' – filmed in the West Midlands)</p> <p>Teachers might use circle time, silent discussion or w piece of structured written work as the unit ends to facilitate informed responses to questions like these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What have we learned from Sikh belief and lifestyle? ▪ How do Sikh ideas and stories relate to pupils' own ways of life? ▪ How are pupils developing their own understanding of beliefs and religion? ▪ Why do many Sikh people now live in the West Midlands or other parts of the England? ▪ What have we learned about one of Wolverhampton's Sikh centres and Gurdwaras ▪ How Sikhs in our area celebrate Baisakhi or Guru Nanak's Birthday; ▪ What do Sikhs teach and believe about fairness and respect? What might this mean for us? What might it mean for Wolverhampton if our community followed this guidance? <p>What matters most to Sikhs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils might consider putting on an awards ceremony to demonstrate their understanding. The idea is to choose the most important value (e.g. equality, service, sharing, honesty, accepting God's will, etc). Groups of pupils can take a value each, show when Sikhs put this value in to practice, and prepare a short speech to say why this is the most important value for Sikhs and most important for pupils in Wolverhampton • They present their argument for their value to the rest of the class, and at the end the class have to vote for the most important for Sikhs and for Wolverhampton. Is there something pupils and your school should do, having chosen this particular value from Sikhi? Describe some similarities and differences between Sikh ways of life and other ways of life • Can they show that they can use a developing religious vocabulary to make links between Sikh ways of life and my own ways of life and the beliefs that are expressed through them? • Can they apply what they have learned about Sikhs to some of their own ideas about God, worship, values or celebration, asking questions about the impact of religion and belief for individuals and communities? 	<p>Many pupils will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formulate some questions and suggest some answers arising from the story of Guru Nanak's disappearance: what kind of religious experience was this? ▪ Share questions about God which are often asked and suggest how a Sikh might answer these in light of the teachings of Guru Nanak in the Mool Mantar ▪ Explain their views about connections between stories and teachings of the Gurus and issues in today's world, suggesting what action a Sikh might take, and why, in response ▪ Express their own reasoned ideas, using a variety of media, about the value for society today, of one of the key principles which Sikhs seek to defend e.g. equality, selfless service, commitment 	
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